

# QUESTIONS OF AESTHETICS

## GENERAL

1. What is a work of art?
2. How does a work of art differ from other things in the world?\
3. Is a candy bar, for example, a work of art?
4. What is an aesthetic experience?
5. How do aesthetic experiences differ from other kinds of experiences?
6. What makes an experience aesthetic?
7. Can a work of art exist without a physical form?
8. What makes a work of art “good”?
9. Can a work of art be ugly and good?
10. Are critical judgment and taste the same thing?
11. Is there an ideal beauty?
12. Is there “truth” in works of art?
13. Must all aesthetic objects possess aesthetic value?
14. Is beauty common to all works of art?
15. Are there standards by which works of art can be judged?
16. Can a work of art have multiple aesthetic meanings?
17. Why do we call some works of art “masterpieces”?
18. Is art important?
19. What makes someone an artist?
20. If someone has a sensory impairment, does this preclude understanding the work of art aesthetically?

## INTENTIONALITY

1. Are natural aesthetic experiences like rainbows and sunsets works of art?
2. Are paintings or photos of rainbows and sunsets works of art?
3. Does eating a candy bar or watching a sunset have anything in common with our experiences with works of art?
4. Can a work of art mean more or less than the artist intended?
5. Can a work of art be accidental, like a traffic jam or a pile of junk?
6. Can a work of art be natural—can a tree be work of art?

## FORMAL

1. Do colors, lines, shapes, sounds, movements have intrinsic meaning?
2. How might the form of an art work differ from its content?
3. Could a simple design be a work of art?
4. Can a formal quality change meaning within a work of art?
5. Can a formal quality have multiple meanings or no meaning?

## SENSUOUS

1. Does the meaning of formal qualities change when rearranged?
2. How can movement be aesthetic?
3. Do multiple works of art together have a different aesthetic meaning than a single work?

## REPRESENTATIONAL

1. Is the subject matter (representations) of a work of art its meaning?
2. In what sense might a realistic work of art be real?
3. What makes an object symbolic?
4. Is all representational art also abstract art?
5. How is subject matter related to aesthetic meaning in a work of art?
6. Is certain subject matter intrinsically more aesthetic than others?
7. Is representational art inherently more significant, aesthetically, than non-objective art?
8. If you do not know the subject matter or symbolism in a work of art, can it be experienced aesthetically?
9. Does the setting of a work influence its aesthetic value?

## PROCESS-RELATED

1. Does knowing a work of is an oil painting help us with the aesthetic experience of viewing it?
2. Are some media more aesthetically-evocative than others?
3. In etching, is the plate from which the print is made a work of art?
4. Is the first print made from the etched plate the only work of art and all other prints copies?
5. Does knowing the process by which the work was created change the way it experienced aesthetically?

## FUNCTIONAL

1. Can an advertisement be a work of art?
2. Can architectural structures be expressive?
3. Can a mass-produced object be a work of art?
4. Can art have a practical function and still be art?
5. How does a work of art change when it is used in therapy?

## CULTURAL/HISTORICAL

1. Can the meaning of a work of art from a different culture, time or place be understood?
2. Is there a "language" of art?
3. Are aesthetic values universal?
4. Is the artist the best interpreter of his/her work?
5. What is style in works of art?
6. Is Expressionism (for example) a more important style of art than Impressionism (for example)?
7. How does time affect aesthetic values?
8. Must a work of art have an "audience"?
9. Can something be a work of art to one person of culture and not to another?